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INFO RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0350
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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR RICHARD NEPHEW AND JODY DANIEL IN ISN/RA AND
HEATHER VON BEHREN IN IO/T

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2018

TAGS: [IAEA](#) [PARM](#) [MNUC](#) [IR](#) [SY](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN RECEIVES DEMARCHE, NON-PAPER ON MESA GROUP
SEAT AT IAEA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

REF: SECSTATE 99745

Classified By: DCM Arnold A. Chacon for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY. Embassy Madrid engaged the GOS through a variety of channels to solicit Madrid's support of USG actions described in REFTEL. The GOS has stated that it shares USG concerns about the prospect of Syria or Iran obtaining a seat on the IAEA Board of Directors, but has indicated that Madrid would vote in favor of Kazakhstan's candidacy if the Mesa Group could not resolve the issue through its own voting process. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) PolCouns delivered the substance U.S. concerns via telephone to Carmen Bujan, the MFA's DG for Strategic Affairs and Terrorism, and to the chief of staff to the MFA's new Political Director. (The Poldir was already en route to New York for UNGA meetings.) Bujan indicated Spain shared U.S. concern about the Iran and Syria candidacies.

3. (C) PolOff delivered the talking points and classified non-paper to Gonzalo de Salazar, the MFA's Deputy DG for Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, who emphasized two points: (1) that GOS hoped that the Mesa Group would resolve the matter through its own voting process rather than have the unresolved issue go to a vote among the IAEA General Conference. (2) However, if the General Conference had to vote, the GOS would support Kazakhstan, which Salazar said has very good credentials for the seat. He said that the GOS considers Kazakhstan a stronger candidate than Afghanistan and suggested that Asana has pursued a better trajectory in terms of its proliferation and non-proliferation policies.

4 (C) Comment: Salazar showed no indication that Madrid was considering supporting Syria's candidacy as a goodwill gesture in advance of Spanish President Zapatero's recently announced trip to Syria, which is tentatively scheduled to occur before the end of the year.
Aguirre